

REMARKS

In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reexamination of the present application. Claims 12, 16 and 18 have been amended and Claims 8-10 have been cancelled. No new claims have been added.

Specifically, Claim 12 has been amended to depend upon independent Claim 15, Claim 16 has been rewritten as a dependent claim depending on Claim 15, and Claim 18 has been amended to correct an obvious typographical error.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103

The Examiner has rejected Claims 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,371,834 by Fujimura et al. in view of any one of U.S. Patent No. 7,025,668 by Petroski et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,284,114 by Chechik et al. or U.S. Patent No. 3,284,274 by Hulslander et al.

The Examiner has also rejected Claims 8, 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujimura et al. in view of any one of Petroski et al., Chechik et al. or Hulslander et al. and U.S. Patent No. 6,890,244 by Hsu et al.

Obviousness-Type Double Patenting

Claims 8-10, 12 and 16-18 have been rejected on the grounds of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,749,487 by Okuhata et al. in view of the prior cited art.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that the Examiner has allowed independent Claim 15. In this regard, Applicants have amended dependent Claim 12 to depend upon independent Claim 15 and have amended independent Claim 16 to also depend upon independent Claim 15. Claims 17 and 18 depend upon Claim 16. Claims 8-10 have been cancelled.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance and such disposition is requested.

Applicants do not believe that any additional fees are due with regard to this Response to Office Action. However, if any fees are due, please debit those fees from Deposit Account No. 50-1419.

In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecute and or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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